

REGION 10 — MARINE

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December came in rather mild with a few lingering warblers and some hardy species. As the month progressed cold weather set in and by the latest Christmas Census, December 31, taken by the South Nassau group on a cold, very windy day, although some 110 species were counted, numbers were down in many species to single individuals. As winter progressed a great scarcity of small birds was noted.

February was the coldest since 1958. On 25 of February's 28 days the temperature dropped to 23 degrees or lower and rose to the freezing point on only ten days. March came in rather mild in comparison and record heat was reported for one day by the end of the month.

Spring migration of Redwings and Cowbirds and Grackles came through in early March, late for the normal February advances northward. Savannah, Fox, Song and Vesper Sparrows were very scarce along the outer beach.

The duck census came through in a normal fashion with practically the same dependable observers carrying it through up to its ninth year. Much appreciation is given to the 66 observers in the completion of the 1963 Waterfowl Count for Region 10. A sad note came a month or so after the census in the announcement of the death of Edward J. Whelen, dominant leader and past president of the Brooklyn Bird Club. Ed directed the most extensive waterfowl count of all areas with a good experienced group of his faithful club. This included Rockaway Point and Brooklyn, East River, Upper and Lower Bays, all of Staten Island and the Hudson River on the Manhattan waterfront. He will be greatly missed. The 1963 census total was 140,821-118,718 for Long Island and 22,103 for New York city, including lower Westchester, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island. As to the weather: a cold, windy spell ushered in the New Year followed by a milder period with rain on both week-ends of the waterfowl count. The number of Mute Swans was away up. Normally in the 600's or less, this year they totaled 821. There was an abundance of Ring-necked Ducks; Redheads were slightly higher than last year; Mallards, Canvasback and American Widgeon were down; no European Widgeon showed up on the count, but there was a mid-December record.

Aside from the census, there was a very good showing of Harlequin Ducks and both Eiders. Our most remarkable waterfowl record this winter was the shooting of three Fulvous Tree Ducks on western Great South Bay near Sexton Island, December 22, out of a flock of six or eight.

Abbreviations: J Bea — Jones Beach.

Observers: IA — I. Alperin; WA — W. Astle; JB — John Bull; JE — J. Elliott; Gewecke — Mr. & Mrs. G. Gewecke; JL — Mrs. G. Lamoueux; RL — R. Latham; EM — E. Mudge; EMc — Mrs. E. McMullen; EMo — E. Morgan; DP — D. Puleston; QCBC — Queens County Bird Club; GR — G. Raynor; CW — C. Ward.

Loons — Ducks: Both Common and Red-throated Loons were down as were Horned Grebes. There was a Red-necked Grebe at J Bea, Mar 17. Singles of Snowy and American Egret were at J Bea, Mar 16 (CW). Whistling Swan: Several reports, two, Dec 27, 28 at South Haven (GR); two, at J Bea Mar 23 (JE, EM). Numerous reports of flocks of Canada Geese flying over throughout Mar. European Widgeon: one, East Hampton Dec 15 (GR). No Common Teal reports. Shovellers scarce. Greater Scaup down in numbers as were Bufflehead and Oldsquaw. Harlequin Duck: two, at Orient Pt., Feb 10 (GR, DP). Common Eider quite plentiful off Orient and Montauk. King Eider: five, off Montauk, Jan 12 (GR, DP); also a small flock at Montauk, Jan 26 (QCBC). Fulvous Tree Duck: six-eight, Great South Bay Dec 22 (JB).

Hawks — Owls: Sharp-shinned Hawk: one, Montauk Dec 15 (GR). Cooper's Hawk: one, Jan 1 Manorville (GR). Red-shouldered Hawk: one, Mar 25, 26 Brookhaven (DP). Rough-legged Hawk rather scarce. Golden Eagle: one, South Haven, "an immature changing to adult plumage, clearly identified," Dec 26 to Jan 6 (DP, GR). Bald Eagle: two immatures, wintered, seen until Mar 15, South Haven. Pigeon Hawk: one, Dec 23, West Hampton (GR); one seen during winter, J Bea (CW). Duck Hawk: presumably an escape (wearing falconer's jesses). King Rail: one, Dec

29, 30 Mill Neck (JL, WA). Virginia Rail: one, Dec-Feb 3, Manorville (GR). Semipalmated Plover: one, Dec 29, Shinnecock (GR). Ruddy Turnstone: one, Dec 29, Shinnecock (GR). Greater Yellow-legs: two, Dec 29, Shinnecock (GR). Oystercatcher: one, Mar 30 Moriches (QCBC). Woodcock: several reports throughout this winter, Mill Neck, Northport and Tackapausha Preserve. Iceland Gull: one, Jan 12, Montauk (DP, GR). Dovekie: two dead in Seaford in Dec (EMo); two, Dec 7, Moriches, one dead on lawn, one alive in creek (GR). Barn Owl: one, Dec 27 and Jan 3, Brookhaven (DP); one, Feb 16 Montauk (GR). Long-eared and Short-eared Owls: several reports, somewhat scarcer than last year. Great Horned Owl: three reports — one, central Suffolk County; two, mid-Feb, Orchard Beach. Saw-whet Owl: one, freshly killed, Jan 12 Montauk (GR).

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: Kingfisher: wintered at Crcbmeadow marsh (EMc). Red-bellied Woodpecker: one, present mid-Dec and Mar 25, Wantagh (Gewecke). Phoebe: one, Mar 8, Pt. Washington (R. Cioffi); one, Mar 17, Northport (EM). Tree Swallow: present at J Bea in early Mar. Purple Martin: Mar 9 (very early) Montauk (DP, GR). Tufted Titmouse: three Dec into Jan and Feb, Wantagh (Gewecke); six at Smithtown and four or more at feeder in Center — each most of the winter (GR); also seen in several other locations. Carolina Wren: two wintered, Greenport (RL); two, Northport (EMc). Mockingbird: half-a-dozen reports. Brown Thrasher: singles at Orient and at Greenport (RL). Robin: several during winter at Orient (RL). The Bluebird shows an increase with six seen at Orient, Mar 15 (RL); nine, Jan 28, Mill Neck (E. Fruson); eight, Dec 15 Montauk (GR). Water Pipit: several small bands, up to 20 birds at Orient (RL). Northern Shrike: one, Mar 8, Pt Washington (it killed an House Finch) (J. Waite); one, Dec 15 Montauk (GR). Loggerhead Shrike: one, Jan 26 Montauk (QCBC).

Warblers — Sparrows: Warblers — Orange-crowned: one or two reports; Black-throated Green: one Dec 4 (latest) Northport (EMc); Pine: one, Mar 25, Westbury (JL); Palm: one, Jan 5 Freeport (CW). Yellow-breasted Chat: one, Dec 15 Montauk; one, Center Moriches, Dec 16-21; one, early Dec to Jan 12 (when found dead) Moriches (GR). Baltimore Oriole: one, Dec 8, Cutchogue (P. Stoutenburg). Red-winged Blackbird: strays during the winter, 25, Mar 4, Orient (RL). Rusty Blackbird: one, Dec 6 Northport (EMc); two, same place, Mar 10 (EM). Dickcissel: one at feeder, Dec 2 to late Jan, East Moriches (J. Bennett); one daily, East Marion (DP). Evening Grosbeak: appeared around Feb 26 in eastern Suffolk Co. (DP); 50, Mar 15 at Eastport (GR); several small flocks, Feb 1 through Mar at Orient (RL). Purple Finch: in groups up to 15 birds the whole period (RL); several early Mar reports in Western Long Island. Redpoll: two, Feb 10 Orient (GR). Siskin: two flocks in Feb, one of 75 birds, Feb 24, Orient (RL), the other of 40 birds Feb 21 at Gilgo (IA). Towhee: two wintered in Orient (RL); also many Cardinals at feeding stations. Ipswich Sparrow: four or five locations; one, Mar 9 Montauk (GR). Savannah Sparrow: a few wintered, first increase Mar 24 (RL). Fox Sparrows returned in early Mar. Lapland Longspur were more frequent than normally in winter at Orient, as many as 20 in a flock (RL). Both Snow Buntings and Horned Larks were very scarce this winter where usually flocking on open fields. Only one flock of about 200 Snow Buntings at Orient in Jan; last seen, Mar 22 (RL).

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